

# Establishing an Effective Municipal Association

Ukraine

## Background

Historically in Ukraine, local governments were considered a branch of the national government; hence, there was no need for a separate organization to represent local government interests. By 1994, when the first local elections were held, local governments had gained autonomy and responsibilities. Local officials realized that new mechanisms were necessary to promote local government interests at the national level; educate local government officials about important civic issues and mobilize their support; promote communication among municipalities through exchanges of experience, group procurement, and other cooperative activities; increase public education about local government and key city issues; and coordinate formal training of local government officials and municipal staff.

## Innovation

In January 1995, the new local elected officials reconstituted an earlier organization of city executives into the Ukraine Association of Cities (UAC). A new charter was adopted to reflect that the heads of City Councils (mayors) had been elected in the first local government elections. The charter also asserted that the principal mission of the UAC would be to organize and represent municipalities at the national level. The key characteristics of the UAC as defined in its charter are:

- It is an inclusive, non-partisan organization—elected officials in the member cities represent the full range of the political spectrum.
- It represents cities of all sizes—all but two of the 29 oblast capital cities are members.
- Cities are members, not mayors—membership requires passage of an ordinance by the City Council. Fees for membership are based on city population.
- Operational costs are financed entirely from membership fees.
- The UAC office in Kiev operates with a small but effective professional staff (of approximately 15) led by an executive board (10 members) and an elected president, who meet monthly.
- The UAC involves its members and communicates actively with them through newsletters and in-country study tours.

## Results

Since 1995 the UAC has been effectively lobbying for local government at the national level. It is a major player in drafting local government legislation and national-level administrative procedures that impact on local government. The UAC facilitates the establishment of local self-government in Ukraine both by helping city officials define and articulate their role and by educating citizens in local government functions, responsibilities, and issues. The UAC fosters collaboration among municipalities and facilitates the exchange of ideas and cooperation among cities.

## Summary

To promote local government interests at the national level an earlier organization of city executives was renamed and reconstituted as the Ukraine Association of Cities (UAC). The UAC facilitates exchange of ideas, promotes local self-government, and effectively lobbies and represents local government interests at the national level.

For more information contact:

**Myroslav Pittsyk, Executive Director, UAC, Kiev**  
**Tel./Fax: 380-44-220-5183**  
**Tel.: 380-44-224-3042**